

POWDERY MILDEW OF AVOCADO

H. C. Burnett

Avocado, *Persea americana* Mill., is a popular fruit and shade tree in south central and south Florida. The fruit is used mostly in salads and is appreciated for its nut-like flavor (1,2).

Powdery mildew, caused by the fungus *Oidium* sp., is not often a serious problem on bearing trees, but may be troublesome on nursery trees (3).

SYMPTOMS. On young developing leaves, the undersurface may be covered with a white, powdery fungus growth. On more mature leaves, infected areas on the undersurface appear purplish. The upper leaf surface opposite the infected areas is yellow or yellowish green (fig. 1). On young trees the tips of tender shoots may be killed (3).

CONTROL. This disease is usually not serious enough to require control measures; however, on occasion, chemical control may be necessary. In such cases, basic copper sulfate (48-53% copper) is suggested as a fungicide (4). The first spray should be applied during the first part of May and should be followed by 2 additional sprays at monthly intervals. A fourth application is suggested during the first half of September.

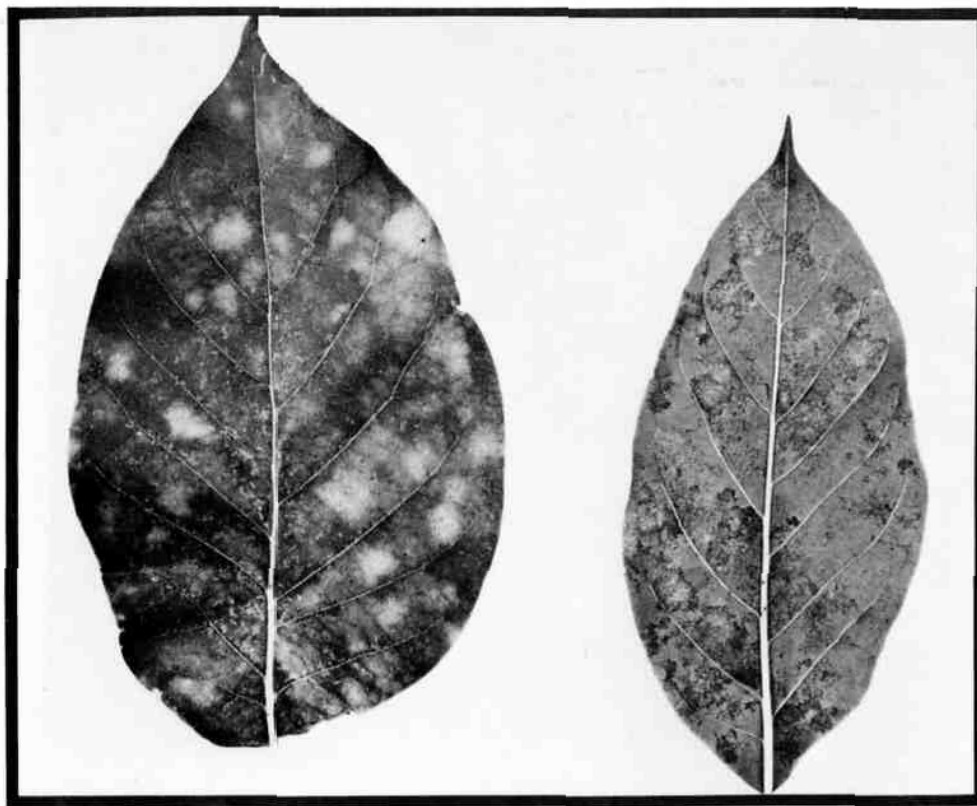


Fig. 1. Powdery mildew on top and bottom leaf surfaces of avocado.

Literature Cited

1. Bush, C. S. 1969. Flowers, shrubs, and trees for Florida homes. Fla. Dept. Agr. and Consumer Serv. Bull. 195. 179 p.
2. Malo, S. E., and C. W. Campbell. 1972. The avocado. IFAS Fruit Crops Fact Sheet #3. 4 p.
3. Stevens, H. E. 1922. Avocado diseases. Fla. Agr. Exp. Sta. Bull. 161. 23 p.
4. University of Florida, Inst. of Food and Agr. Sci. 1971. Plant disease control guide, p. III-3.